

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C. 20013

DEC 07 2004

SUBJECT: EOP – Sexual Harassment Policy

TO: All NRCS Employees

File Code: 230

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is committed to ensuring a work environment that is free of sexual harassment. It is the policy of NRCS to enforce a “zero tolerance” policy for such behavior.

As Chief, I am committed to ensuring that NRCS employees and customers, male and female, are permitted to work in an environment that is free from sexual harassment and from retaliation for reporting such harassment. Sexual Harassment is illegal, and is a form of sex discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

For the purpose of this policy statement, sexual harassment is defined as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of such conduct, explicitly or implicitly, affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the work environment is free from discrimination. To do otherwise is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. These officials must take prompt and appropriate action when sexual harassment is alleged. It is also important to safeguard and be sensitive to every employee's right to work in an environment that is free of offensive misconduct. Reports of violations must be examined immediately, and resolved swiftly, consistently, and fairly. Reprisal against any person alleging sexual harassment should be taken seriously. Any NRCS employee who is found to have engaged in sexual harassment is subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including removal.

All NRCS employees, customers, and others performing official work or receiving assistance are required to fully adhere to this policy. Managers and supervisors should post this notice on bulletin boards in prominent locations in all NRCS worksites as a continual reminder that sexual harassment, in any form, is unacceptable behavior and a violation of the law.

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Employees who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment should report the act to their supervisors. Advice on how to handle sexual harassment complaints can be sought from your Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor, National Federal Women's Program Manager, or the Agency's Civil Rights Director. Please contact the Civil Rights Division at 1-866-NRCS395; (301) 504-2181; or (301) 504-2439 (voice or TTY) for assistance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce I. Knight', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

BRUCE I. KNIGHT
Chief